

THE
Inconveniencies of Toleration.
OR
AN ANSWER
To a late Book, Intituled,
A PROPOSITION
Made to the
KING
AND
PARLIAMENT.
FOR THE
SAFETY and HAPPINESS
OF THE
KING and KINGDOM.

*In those dayes there was no King in Israel, but every man did
that which was right in his own eyes. JUDG. 17. 6.*

London, Printed for W. Garret. 1667.

1759

Department of Education

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PROPOSAL

FOR

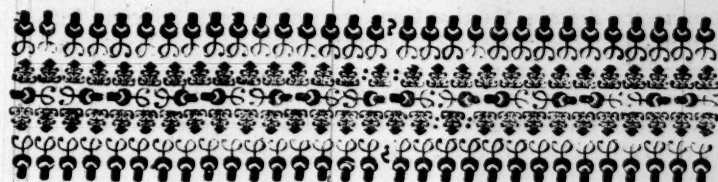
AMENDMENT

TO

THE

ACT OF 1906

RELATIVE TO



Inconveniencies of *TOLERATION*, &c.

LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE is a Thing which hath often made a very Great Noife in the World; and is at the first View, a thing highly plausible; but although it looks hugely pretty in the Notion: yet it was alwayes found strangely Wild and Unmanageable when ever it came to be handled by Experience; and we shall constantly find, That those which cryed it up for the most Reasonable Thing in the world, when Themselves stood in need of it, as soon as ever They came in Power, would never endure to hear of it any longer. They who plead for it for Themselves, do not use to allow it to others; it hath always been so unlucky, as soon as ever it hath succeeded, to be laid aside.

Now Liberty of Conscience is either Absolute, and Universal, or Limited and Restrained: if Universal and Absolute, it layeth us open to all the folly and phrenzy imaginable, to all those Heresies which the Scripture calls Damnable, and is a publick Invitation to all sorts of strong Delusions, and the believing of Lyes, which *St. Paul* cautions us so much against, *2 Thes. 2. 10, 11.* And in *Rev. 2. 14. 15.* the Church of *Pergamus* is charged not with holding Errors Her Self, but tolerating Them in Others. Her guilt was, That She had among Her, Those who held the Doctrine of *Balaam* and the *Nicolaitans*.

But if it be Limited and Restrained: Then it is no longer Liberty of Conscience; but there is a clear Confession, That Conscience is not so Sacred a Thing, but it ought to have Limits and Restraints set upon it. If it be asked, Will you force men to go against their Consciences? I answer, That Consciences may be such, that men ought not to be suffered to act according to them. The Scripture tells us of

Seared Consciences, Reprobate Minds; and Those whose very Mind and Conscience is defiled; So that Conscience alone is no sufficient Justification; Conscience hath its Rule, may swerve, and ought very well to be looked to. I know that no man ought to act against his Mind or Perswasion; But I know withall, That there ought great care to be taken, what Minds and Perswasions men are of. Thus much I thought fit to premize, Because that the Cause is thought sufficiently pleaded, as soon as ever it can be alledged, This is our Conscience: For it may be your Conscience and your Crime too.

THE First Thing which I shall observe in this Treatise, which pretends to so much Peace, Good Will and Moderation, is the Time of its coming out, and that was the Time of an Invasion: Was this a Time to rip up and aggravate Discontents at Home, when we were set upon with a Powerful Enemy from abroad? Who but a Dutch man would have gone about to have affrighted the Credulous Vulgar, with this *Cantering Dismal Strain*? p. 86. *There are I perceive many Fears and Hopes upon the Minds of People, and the Presages of their Hearts are many: I know not whether there be any dark notices from some Spirits that preside over us, of some great Events, sometimes when they are near us: But methinks the Minds of some have of late aboaded some very GREAT EVIL, or Great Good not to be far from us, &c.* He who at such a time, Proclaims the Fears of the Nation, Intended sure to make them fear much more: This way of divulging such Melancholy Omens, could have no end, but to dishearten our People, or to inflame them. I could not, methoughts, pass by this Observation; because it was one Sad Instance, That the Puritan Spirit hath not at all altered his old way of Acting; For so did their Forefathers in 88 try how far they could terrifie the State at that Time, because it was a Time of great Danger.

a Ut externo bello, ita etiam interno Schismate hoc tempore laboravit Anglia (schismatica enim pravitudo semper bello ardente maxime luxuriat). Nec cerne contumax in Ecclesiasticos magistratus impudentia, & consumptiosa improbitas insolentius alias se exercuit. Camb. Eliz. p. 497. in Editione Lond. MDCXV. a England at this Time did labour not onely with a War Abroad, but with Schism at Home: For Schismatical Pravity never fails to add a New Combustion to the heat of War; The Contumacy, Impudence, and Contumelies of these Men did never shew it felt with greater Infolence. Cambd. Eliz. p. 497. in Editione Lond. MDCXV.

They presumed upon the necessities of the State; then they thought they might propose and rail at pleasure, because the Queens Hands were

were sufficiently full of other business; Then came out *Mar-prelate, Diotrefes, the Demonstration, &c.* Thus they use their Native Country as *Simeon and Levi* did the *Sichemites*, as soon as they were *fore*, then not fail to fall upon Them. If ever the State lies under a Disadvantage, These will not fail to help on the Disturbance.

But from the time of the Publication, proceed we to the Book it self, The First Thing we find Observable is p. 9, 10, 11.

THere is a company of People about Us in the Country, &c. The most of them are certainly Inoffensive Persons, and there is no more against Them, than *Pliny* had against the Christians; that They meet and Preach and Pray together, &c.

How harmless, or Inoffensive They may seem to You, we know not: But This, nor our Neighbour Nation, hath not found Them to be such Tame and Modest Things: The Time hath been Known, when They could devour Widows Houses, as well as for a pretence make long Prayers.

Our Charity prompts us to hope, that there are amongst This Sect several good and well meaning People, and such which of themselves would be very harmless and inoffensive; yet, Law makers ought to consider not only what People are, or would be of Themselves, but what use others are like to make of them: It is no News for Men to be made the Instruments of a Design, and yet to know nothing of it; to be the great Engines of such businesses, which had they seen thorough Them, They would have dyed, rather than to have any thing to do with: We are therefore not only to consider the People who meet there, but who they are, which have the Managing of such Meetings; as suppose now that the separated Congregations should think those men the fittest to be Their Guides, who led them on to the late War; That the chief speakers there should be the Abettors and Applauders of the Murther of the King. And these amongst Them who are of their own Nature the most harmless and Inoffensive, are the most likely there to be imposed upon: It is therefore the greatest Kindness of Government toward such Innocent Men, not to permit the Subtle and Malicious, to make a Prey of Them, and abuse their Credulity to be the Instrument of Their Teachers Contrivances. And whereas it is here said, that They Meet only to Preach and Pray together: It ought to be considered that we could repeat strange Things, which have been said in Prayers and Sermons; neither are we sure that They meet only to do that: we Know, that there

may be, and do verily believe, that there is a quite other use of such Assemblies, viz. " To Form and to Know a Party, to Communicate Intelligence and Discontents, to have a Plausible and Unperceivable way of scattering abroad among the whole Nation, all sorts of little " and Malicious stories. There is no such Dangerous way of Libelling, " as that which is vulgarly called a good Gift in Prayer.

THe next Thing observable is p.13. I wonder really in whose Shops They have bought their Spectacles, that They can see this great Thing Unity of Folks Spirits, in Uniformity, &c.

Surely Uniformity doth of all Things in the World look most like to Unity : And St. Paul recommends it to us upon this very score ; That we all speak the same things, being with Him a very great Evidence, That there are no Divisions amongst Us. But because the The credit of these Glasses wherein we perswade our selves, That we see clearly Unity in Uniformity, doth it seems depend very much upon the Shop they came out of : We shal gratifie our Author so far, as to let Him Know whence we had Them ; and to go no further, We were Advised, in the making and using of this sort of Glasses by one who we are sure, will not be denyed to be a most Skilful Work-man in such like Affairs ; even the Non-conformists entirely beloved Mr. Calvin in his Epist. ad Protectorem Anglia, where we have Him expressing his judgment clearly and fully for Uniformity in all its Parts, and utmost Extent of it. " It is

*Expedi-
dem prospicere
defultoriu in-
genit qua sibi
nimium licere
volunt, claudenda est etiam janua curiosis doctrinis.*

fit (saith he) to take great heed of the defultory wits, i. e. The light giddy heady People, who desire for themselves too boundless a Liberty ; the Gate is also to be shut against curious, i. e. new fangled Doctrines.

*b Ratio autem
expedita ad e-
am em una est,
dixit summa
quadam doctri-
na ab omnibus
recepta, quam
inter pradi-
candum se-
quantur omnes, ad quam etiam observandam Omnes Episcopi & Parochi iurejurando astringantur,
ut nemo ad munus Ecclesiasticum admittatur, nisipondeat sibi illum doctrina Consensum inviolabilem futuram,*

But How is this, think You, to be done, by Liberty of Conscience? no, but by a more sober way. " And for This, there is but one ready and assured way : If there be some one Form of Doctrin received of all, which in their Preaching all should follow, to which also all the Bishops and the Parish Priests should by Oath be bound ; and that no man should be admitted to any Ecclesiastical Benefice, unless he promised that That consent of Doctrin should be to him Inviolable.

Here we have Him clear and express, full and home for Uniformity so far.

far as Doctrin reacheth. But Secondly, He is as clear for Uniformity in Prayers, and the Rites and Ceremonies thereof.

“As to the Form of Prayers and Rites Ecclesiastical, I do very much approve, that there be one certain One, partly to provide against the simplicity and idleness of some, and partly to Demonstrate the agreement of our Churches between themselves, and Lastly to provide against the desultory Levity of those men who are alwaies affecting Novelties.

*Quod ad for-
mulam Precum
& Rituum Ec-
clesiasticorum,
valde probe ut
Gentia illa exier-
a quâ Pastori-
bus Discedere*

*in functione sua Non Licet, tum ut consulatur quorundam simplicitati & inertia, Tum ut certò
confites Omnium Ecclesiarum inter se Consensus, Postremò etiam ut obviam eatur desultoria quo-
rundam levitati qui novationes quasdam affectant, p. 68, 69, &c.*

The Second of these Reasons comes home to what our Author makes such a Wonder of, viz. That Uniformity is a great Degree and Evidence of our Unity: And we are told a little before in the same Epistle that there are a sort of seditious People in England, which all Authority is highly concerned to provide against, and He Describes them Thus, “There are (saith he) some Brain-sick People in England, who under the pretence of the Gospel, bring in all sorts of disorder. And his sentence is very Peremptory concerning them; that They ought, “To be restrained by the Avenging Sword.

*Cerebro si qui-
dam qui sub E-
vangelii nomi-
ne a truci av-
passim inve-
stam vellunt.
ultiore gladio
coerceri, &c.*

Now who these People are, who are complained of, as the destroyers of all order, is not surely hard to be conceived: They are the Destroyers of all order, who refuse to be under any, who will own the obligation of no Law (as to these Externals wherein order alone can have any place) but take it very ill; that they are not left wholly and altogether to their own Humour and Capriciousness, or what ever else it is possible for them to mistake for, or to pretend to be their Conscience. And now if we think that Uniformity looks like Unity, we hope the Glasses which we see this thorough, will be no longer derided, when we consider in whose shops we found them exposed to our open view, and we our selves were particularly called upon by the chief Artificer, to make use of Them for this very particular purpose and occasion.

But that Uniformity is a Thing highly to be desired, and by all possible means to be endeavoured after and procured, Is a Thing which I suppose will not be denied by that Party which is here chiefly pleaded for; Because that they have with Hands lifted up to Heaven, sworn Themselves, and not only so, but with all manner of Art and Violence, did perswade and force every one they had Interest in, or

Power.

Power over, to Swear with them ; *That they would endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the Three Kingdomes, to the nearest Conjunction and UNIFORMITY in Religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-Government, Directory for Worship and Catechising.* See the First Article of the Covenant.

We have One Argument more for Uniformity, and that is, The Horrible Divisions which we have seen to arise for the want of it ; and here we appeal to the Sober Part of our Adversaries, who when time was, made great Complaints of this very Thing, the sight of the hideous Heresies, Schisms and Scandals, which did immediately arise among Themselves, did make them cry out mightily to their Rulers for a Law, to set bounds to the Consciences of their own Brethren. Liberty of Conscience is so wild a Spirit, as no Circle will keep in order : And to speak the Truth, it is a Contradiction to own that pretence, and then to offer to set any Bounds unto it.

But to draw towards a Conclusion of this Argument, we do verily believe, That Uniformity if it were carefully maintained, and diligently looked after, would in a few years recall our Ancient Unity ; The People would quickly forget all these Fantasies, if it were not for these small *Levites* which are perpetually buzzing them into their ears ; We should quickly see, that the People would come to the Churches, if there were not so many Conventicles to keep them thence ; and if they were but used for a little while to come thither, they would not find the Liturgy to be such a fearful Idol, as they have been often told of : And I durst confidently say, That if a Tryal were made in any gathered Church about the Town, and many of our Prayers were there repeated *memoriter*, that that man would be accounted one of great Gifts that could pray so sweetly : It is nothing but unacquainteness which makes them lyable to be so scared, with all those terrible and groundless Stories. And I here durst boldly appeal to Thousands, who have since the Kings Return, gone once or twice to hear the Common-Prayer out of Curiosity, and have gone ever after out of Conscience ; and have much wondered at and despised their own credulity, in that they were ever brought to entertain such hard jealousies of so harmless a Thing.

BUt we are told in the next place, That to make Laws in Religious Matters especially, (and by the same Rule in every thing else) is a thing, to say no more, perfectly insignificant and absolutely useless, For, *it is a Principle of a serious tender Christian, that he would not do any*

any thing for fear, which he would not out of Conscience, i. e. As these words must signifie in this place, he will do no more for the sake of the Law, than he would have done without it: And it is a deadly Temptation against the present Injunctions, that they have a penalty annexed to them.

Did ever any hear of a Law without a Penalty? was ever an Injunction drawn up in this form? These things we do enjoy you to do, and if you do them, it shall be to you the same thing as if you let them alone. If the Church hath power to command us any thing, we need go no farther than common sense to infer; That she hath power to punish, if that be not done which is commanded; and now that the Church hath power to make Injunctions of this nature, We have evidence enough from the Scripture it self, where we find our Saviour so far owning this Authority, as that he submitted to it: The Feast of the Dedication was of Institution purely humane, and yet our Lord observed it; *John 10. 22.* Nay farther, our Saviour did not onely observe humane Institutions, where there was no particular command in Scripture for them; but he also did observe such as were in outward Circumstances, quite different from what the Scripture hath appointed them to be in. If this seem strange to us, let us look into *Exod. 12. 11.* where we find the very manner of eating the Pasover plainly prescribed to us, to be done in a standing-Posture, and that with all the punctual Formality, of their Loyns girt, Shooes on their Feet, and Staves in their Hands. Now our Saviour eats it quite otherwise, in a Table-posture leaning, without Loyns girt, Shooes on his Feet, or Staff in his Hand, in perfect compliance with the Uniform practise of that age he lived in.

And that all good Order and Authority was not buried with the Synagogue, is apparent from *St. Paul, 1 Cor. 14. 10. Let all things be done decently and in order.* Upon which *Calvin*: "This which *St. Paul* here requires, cannot be had, unless some Constitutions (like Bonds) be added, by which Order and Decorum may be observed."

Vincula, quibus ipse Ordo & Decorum servetur.

And *Melancthon* in his common places, *Cap. de politia Ecclesiast.* throughout: "Take away the Obligation of humane Ordinances, Men cannot be governed or restrained; So that let us assure our selves, that take away the Ordinances of the Church, and the Church it self is in danger."

dinationibus Ecclesiasticis periclitari etiam Ecclesi.

Add

Ipsam vitam ac naturam hominum intueamur, quæ non potest carere Ceremoniis & ritibus, ut sapientiam dictum est.
 Add in the close of that Argument, "Let us look but into humane Nature, and Man-kind's way of living, and we shall find that it cannot want Ceremonies."

But why do we mention particular Persons? when if there were occasion to multiply words in so clear a case, we have the joint confession of all the Reformed Churches; and he who pleaseth to look into the Harmony of Confessions, may satisfy himself at leisure: We shall only mention the *Bohemian*, because it carries its reason along with it.
 C. 8. Sect. 10. P. 12.

Docent etiam administratio- nis constitutio- nem & ordinem certum in Sacra Ecclesia præstandum esse; Absq[ue] enim Ordinis Constitutione & Administratione externa, non potest bene loco esse, aut bene cum ipsa agi, sicut & cum nulla alia etiam minima communitate.
 "They do teach likewise, That there ought to be a set-Constitution. "on, and a certain Order of Administration in the Holy Church; For "without a Constitution and an outward Administration for Order, "it cannot possibly go well with the Church, as with no other, no not "the least Community."

But now suppose the Church make these Laws, how it Inferiors will not obey them? For that Mr. Calvin shall be their Judge in his Epistle to Farel p. 9. "This hath always obtained in the Church, which hath also been decreed by the ancient Synods, that he who will not be subject to the Laws of the publick Discipline, should be put out of his Office and Employment.
Semper hoc in Ecclesia valuit quod veteribus Synodis fuit decretum, ut qui Subjici communis Discipline legibus noluerit MUNERE ABDICETUR.

Having now upon these several, and we hope convincing Grounds, shewed, that the Church should have a power of commanding, and consequently, of Imposing Penalties in case of Disobedience: We shall a little return and take some small notice of the first ground of this his Argument.

That a tender Christian will not do any thing for fear, which he would not out of Conscience.

If this be intended to represent the Gallantry of that Party, which is here pleaded for; as being a company of Heroick Spirits,

rits, as that they may be perswaded or encouraged, but are at no hand to be frighted into any thing : We shall then say, that we never yet saw reason to believe that they were persons of such great bravery and resolution : We have heard indeed by one who knew them well (King James) *That no Deserts would oblige them, nor no Oaths bind them* ; but we never yet heard, but they were as liable to be terrified as any other Mortals. We suppose that Mr. Love may well pass for one of these serious and tender Christians, and yet Fear prevailed so far upon him, as to make him acknowledg his great Guilt and unfeigned Sorrow for his great Offence ; and own those whom he conspired against, as the Supreme Authority, and promise all manner of Duty and Submission, in hopes of a Reprieve, and that this was not altogether Conscience, appears, in that when they would Reprieve him no longer, he called them Rebels and Traitors. Once again, Mr. Jenkins too, did recant then, and we are more sure that he did comply then, out of the principle of Fear, than we are that his not-Conforming now, proceeds purely out of a principle of Conscience. Nay, did not that whole Party lay aside all mention of the Covenant from Mr. Love's death, till just upon the King's Restauration ? Now I suppose Fear had some influence upon them in this, as well as Conscience. The truth of it is, they are like Spaniels, if they seem to love any, it is after they have been soundly beaten ; or rather, they are of the basest of all Dispositions, who really love no body, but yet will cringe and fawn upon any one, so long as they are afraid of him. And if this be the character of a tender Christian, to do nothing for fear, sure we are, that the tender Christian is (of all places) the most unlikely to be found amongst those who talk so much of having tender Consciences.

IN pursuance of the former Argument, we are told, p. 14. That, if *in lieu of proposing such a piece of Banishment to fright the Nonconformists into the late Oath enjoined in the Act at Oxford, there had been offered a Liberty of the Ministry, on that Condition, without any Penalty, the Act had been perhaps to purpose.*

It is to me not a little wonder, that any one who hath but the face of a man, can pretend to complain, as if there had been any severity in enjoining the Oath made at Oxford : And to satisfy any, whether that which is here called Banishment, (i.e. removal five miles from a Corporation) be a Punishment any thing less necessary for the refusing that Oath, there will be little requisite besides consulting the Oath, which follows in these words, viz.

C

I

I A. B. do swear, That it is not lawfull on any pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King; and that I do abhor that Trayte *our position*, of taking Arms by His Authority against His Person, or against those who are Commissionated by Him, in pursuance of such Commissions; and that I will not at any time endeavour any Alteration of Government either in Church or State.

Now it is clear, that this Oath is not an Ecclesiastical, but a Civil Oath, made purely for the safety of the King's Person and Authority, and was, with some addition, in force before; and being refused, the pretence was not any thing of Disloyalty, (no, the time was not come to profess that) but because there was in it a clause for the Renouncing of the Covenant: The Parliament therefore being willing to comply, not only with their infirmity, but with their very peevishness, contrived the substance of the former Oath without that clause in it, only binding them to profess, That it was not lawfull to bear Arms, &c. *ut supra*. Now the refusal of such an Oath as this, wherein they are only required to swear, That they will not serve this King as they did his Father; One would think were Confiscation of goods, perpetual Imprisonment, or Banishment, in the proper sense of that Word; when lo, it is nothing but the being removed five Miles from a Corporation. They who will not promise, not to subvert the Government, shall have the whole Protection of It, with this only Caution taken against them, That they shall not live in such populous places, where they may have Opportunity to seduce great Numbers every day, to those Attempts which they will not be brought so much as to profess for to disclaim. And yet even this is not exacted, as those who walk London Streets, know well enough; and now where there is so direct, so reasonable, and wishal, so Merciful a Law; One would think, that instead of complaining, they should rather express their Gratitude towards the King for his so wonderful, I had almost said so Groundless an Indulgence, in not putting in execution this Act, which is so great a piece of his own security, as it is a restraint upon those who will not so much as Engage themselves, not to Destroy him and his Government.

THE next, p. 15, is a Project of our Author's against his own Brethren; and that is, to serve them as *Julian did the Primitive Christians*, to keep them out of every Office and Employment. And

I shall thus far yeild to his Advice, as to acknowledg, that if it were carefully followed, we should quickly see that it would have a very good effect. But we must add, that he hath put a very odd *Complement* upon His Majesty and the Parliament in thus representing Them to be worse than *Julian*.

But the next, p. 17. is infinitely more inexcusable; he doth there tell us how the King of Japan first put to death every man who was a Christian: This not serving the turn, he executed the whole Family where any Christian was harboured; This not doing it neither, he commanded that both that House where any Christian was found, and the next two Houses on both sides of it, should be all put to execution.

And now when he did reasonably suppose, that every one who reads this dismal passage, had his heart full of horror and detestation at this so barbarous and unexampled inhumanity, he most spitefully inferrs, That this is the course which he and his are to expect likewise.

Lay that right hand on your breast, weigh what I say; You must either come to This, if you see to the end, or you must come to an Accommodation.

Have these men already forgot how their Lives were (by the plain Known Laws of the Land) every one forfeit to His Majesty? And how earnest the King was to pass the *Act of Indemnity*: How Religious he hath been in observing it? And when themselves find the Government so mild, as they by this sort of scribbling dare show how little they are afraid of it; see what manner of returns they make. Ought not now some other course besides Mildness, be taken with them, who shall thus dare to *Allarum* the Nation, that if he and his have not their Wills, there is approaching the most horrid Tyranny which ever the Sun saw? I dare confidently say, That however these Jealousies may promise their Design, in inflaming the people; yet themselves do not in the least believe, that ever such Rigour is intended toward them: and if they were more afraid, they would not complain half so much.

Hitherto we have had little but *Lamentations* and *Complainings*, that there are in general, *Laws* and *Injunctions* which they cannot away with.

BUT now, p. 18. We are plainly told what there is in those Laws which doth so much offend them: First, negatively; *It is not the Dignity of the Bishops, their Lordships and Revenues; It is not their Cathedrals, Organs, and their Divine Service, in what State and Magnificence they please: It is not Common-Prayer, no nor any Ceremony of the Church, for all its significancy, if it be but a Circumstance of Worship, and no more, that could hinder most of the judicious and sober Nonconformists to come over to you, &c.*

These things it seems are Lawful, and they can come over to them: It were to be wished that they would instruct their Profelytes but thus much as they here openly profess, and not for ever infuse dismal jealousies into the heads and hearts of the people, against those things which themselves own so perfectly innocent, and what they can at any time come over to: But hath not the irresistible evidence of Truth, here forced them to give up at once no less than their whole Cause, or at least, to take away all manner of colour from it? For seeing that these things are all innocent, What one thing can there possibly be alledged to create any longer scruple?

Here is a clear Confession, That these men are guilty of the most unreasonable *Schism* that ever was, or ever can be in the World, because it is such a *Schism* which is in their own judgments utterly without any reason; For there is not any thing required, but what they here profess that they can come over to: The Church exacts Conformity to nothing but what the very Dissenters acknowledg that all the sober and judicious men among them can come over to. But are these men to be esteemed, or *Sober*, or *Judicious*, which stand out in so causeless a *Schism*? which keep up so needless a *Separation*, and divide (not to say the Church, but) their Native Country, by refusing to do such things which they *know* and *own*, that they may do, and do them very unlawfully.

But if these things do not keep them out, what doth? For these are all the things which the Dispute lies about; Why? *It is these Declarations, Subscriptions, and Oaths, which you impose upon them, &c.*

If the former doth not hinder, I see no reason why this latter should; For, if we may do such a thing, why may we not declare that we will do it? If we do believe these things, why may we not *Subscribe* to them? And what is the harm of an Oath to a thing which hath no harm in it: And as to the Imposition, that alone cannot alter the Case,

Case; For if such a thing (suppose a significant *Ceremony*) be in it self lawful, then the Magistrate by imposing a significant *Ceremony*, hath only imposed that which is a lawful thing. The Law is here notoriously and confessedly innocent in every particular, because that every particular which it doth require, is owned and confessed to be innocent.

BUt as for Oaths, we are farther told, *That be they taken, or be they not taken, they sign'fie nothing.*

We live then certainly in a very mad Age. But of all men, the *Presbyterians* are the best qualified to teach this DoArine, *That Oaths, be they taken, or not taken, they signifie nothing.* All *Europe* will bear witness, that with them they have indeed signified nothing.

AND that, not only because there is no hole wherout a man can creep, that hath taken a former Oath, but he can get out of the same, or find another like it, in any new Oath you put upon him, p. 20.

At this rate, there must be no *Oaths* at all, Because too many may be tempted to break them; but I shall not make any longer Annotations upon this, because I will not presume to vie skill with a *Puritan* in what belongs to the shifting out of any Oath, especially if it be a lawful one; I shall readily acknowledg, that they are, of all others, the most experienced Masters of that Faculty.

BUT in Confirmation of what went before, we are farther told, *That there is nothing that is a mans duty, or unlawful, before he hath taken the Oath, but it remains as it was, after he hath taken it; and he will be obliged neither more nor less, (I speak as to the thing, not degree) whether he take it, or not take it.*

The Obligations of *Oaths* is certainly much stronger than this Author seems here to make it: The thing which was my duty before, if once I become sworn to it, this is a very strait Bond to tye me faster to it; my *scam* is particularly laid in pawn, and *God Almighty*, besides a Judg, is a Party to exact the thing in that I have sworn it: Nay, in unlawful things, the Oath hath a sad *Obligation*; not to do the thing, it is true; for nothing can bind me to commit a sin: but alas, by taking this unlawful Oath, I have brought my self into a necessity of sinning,

ning, let me take which course I can; whether I do the thing it self, or break the Oath whereby I swore to do it. If the *Limitation* in the *Parentthesis* (I speak as to the Thing, not Degree) were intended to qualify the crudeness of this (otherwise) wild Assertion, I am content to let it pass: I shall only add, That if we should grant these premises, he could not infer a Conclusion wide enough for his purpose, because his enumeration of particulars is very lame; for, besides, those things which are Duty absolutely, and those which are absolutely Unlawful, there are a sort of things of a middle nature, only Lawful of themselves, but not necessary; which before the Oath I might have done, but after the Oath I must do; and this part of the Division ought not to have been forgot, because our great Contest is concerning these things of this middle nature.

BUT p. 23, 24, the Proposer speaks home, *I would to God there had never been an Oath, besides the Assertory Oath, &c.*

Aud p. 25, *Indeed an Oath in civil Things, that is taken of good will, is of moment; but an Oath upon Constraint we abhor.*

Sure the Wisdom of all Nations hath been strangely mistaken; if so be, that Promissory Oaths are not things of very great use and Obligation: Solomon, among other Reasons by which he presseth Obedience to Kings, reckons up this as one; and that not the least considerable, in regard of the Oath of God. The Examples of this in the Scripture, are very frequent, David and Jonathan, David to Bathsheba concerning Solomon's Succession, to the Gibeonites, with many others: And the indispensable Obligation of such Oaths, is declared Numb. 30. v. 2. *If a man vow a Vow, or swear an Oath, to bind the soul with a bond, he shall not break or profane his Word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*

WELL, but this, perhaps if the Oath be taken voluntarily, of our own accord: For, indeed, *an Oath in Civil things, which is taken with a good will, is of moment; but an Oath upon Constraint we abhor.*

Then if any will of their own accord swear not to kill the King, these may, but at no hand we must not compel them to it. The Scriptures furnish us with many Examples of imposed Oaths, by Moses, Joshua, David, Asa, Jehoida and Nehemiah, &c. 2 Chr. 15. 12. *Asa caused the people*

ple to come to *Jerusalem*, and there they made a Covenant to seek the Lord God of their Fathers; but perhaps the people were every one of them Unanimous, and desirous to enter into such a Covenant: That is not likely, that there should be so immediate, and so sudden a change, seeing that v. 3. *they had been for a long season without the true God, and without Priest to teach, and without the Law*: And v. 13. *We see a plain, and a very great Coercion used, And whosoever will not seek the Lord God of Israel, shall be slain, whether he were small or great, man, or woman*. Ezra 10 v. 5. *He caused the Chief Priests, and the Levites, and all Israel to swear, that they would do according to this word*.

And thus did all the good Kings of *Judah*, as it were easie to produce, *impose Oaths*, and that too in Religious matters: Now there were amongst them divers certainly of different perswasions, who would have been glad to have been exempt from those Oaths, as appears by their several Groves and High-places (amongst which, no doubt, there were several pious and well-meaning, however deluded persons, who might have said, We worship God according to our Consciences, and the best of our Light.) But these different Lights and Perswasions did not hinder those godly, as well as wise Magistrates, from imposing such an Oath, but rather it was the grand cause or motive of such Impositions, to discover who they were who were of another Perswasion, that they might be observed, and care taken of them, that they might be questioned, and, if possible, in time reduced.

THE next is a rare Reason, why there should be never any more Laws made, *Ruit humanum genus per veritum*; To command a thing wherein we were before left free, is enough to whet our humane nature unto opposition; to prohibit it, will make it coveted, &c.

If people do grow eager after a thing, meerly because there is a Law against it. There is but one way to prevent this, and that is, To put the Law in vigorous execution. I must confess, That a little Restraint doth sometimes whet our appetite; and that the vulgar are so silly as to desire a thing sometimes meerly because it is forbidden them; and we shall readily grant that it is thus in the instance he hath given us, That, if many of the ejected Ministers who are flockt to now when they venture to preach, had liberty to say on till they had wearied themselves and Auditors out, we should see how the rowling Snow-balls would melt, and, excepting a few of the Eminent of them, their Congregations would quickly grow thin enough.

We

We are easily perswaded . that the people would quickly see cause to grow weary of them, and do very much wonder what it is which makes them at all flocked after ! How such flat, and empty , and wretched Stuff , should ever have the luck to be esteemed Gospel-preaching.

PAge 29. *I do verily hope in the Lord, That there is nothing in these fears and dreadful abodings of many good mens hearts, about the Discipline and way of Worship in our Church, but a conceit, the Lord knows, I do not know.*

Is it not therefore very wisely and Christianly done of the Magistrates , to silence those Men who make it their great business to put such foolish and odd conceits into the peoples heads, who make them to fear , where you confess that no fear is ? Are these men fit to have the charge of Souls committed to them , who love to keep their Proselytes all their life-time in Pupillage , under those childish and empty terrors, which you properly resemble to Ghosts and Goblins ? Things which may indeed fright us very much , but it is only because we will not be made to understand that there is nothing in them : And whereas we are advised, p. 33. *To root out such conceptions* ; we must still accept our Author's concession , That these are conceptions fit to be rooted out ; and we think , that if that sort of Teachers were removed, who nourish up such silly Apprehensions , these jealousies , as having no foundation , would in a little time, of their own accord , wear all away.

The next thing considerable , is an Argument for *Liberty of Conscience* upon a Politick Account , That *Liberty of Conscience* is the thing which always prevails, which side soever it is of.

I*T was this which was the better of the King in the Warres, pulled down the Bishops, went along with the Parliament-Army, afterward pulled up the Parliament, and sate down and reigned with Cromwel, p.45.*

Is this the chief Art they have to recommend *Liberty of Conscience* to the King's Affections , to lay before Him how it Murdered His Father, proscribed Himself , and sate down with the Usurper on the Royal Throne ? Sure this is not intended , as that this was a likely way to endear it to the King, that it has done so much against Him : It is strange that this should be used as an Argument to this King and Parliament,

ment to Establish any thing, because it was the thing which Reigned with *Cromwel*, and shall Eternize that *Mortal*, *ibid*. I cannot perswade my self, that one, who only intended to supplicate for Favour, would ever have pleaded so unsuitable a Motive: I rather, therefore, construe it as a Tacit Threat: This is that which Liberty of Conscience is able to Do; and if you will not grant it, you have felt its force once already, and you know not how soon you may feel it again. But of all the things which are here said in the behalf of Liberty of Conscience, I cannot chuse but smile, that it is here said to Restore the *King*, p. 46. Surely the Church of *England* may say, without Boasting, That Her Sons were the truest, the most constant Subjects the *King* had: You cannot name any other Party in the Nation, chuse where you will, but something may be Objected, as to their Deviation from the strict Rules of Loyalty, among the *Nobility, Gentry, Citizens, Country-men*; if there were any who were beyond their Neighbours eminently Royallists, they were likewise noted as eminently Prelatical: These were the men who made every other Government uneasy, by Dissenting from, and upon all occasions Opposing of it: All other Denominations set up, courted, owned every Usurping Power, engaged, addressed, did what they could to make an Interest, vvhile the Episcopal Perswasion alwayes held off. These were alwayes Praying, Pleading, Plotting for the *King*; when according to your own Confession, the tender Consciences vv ere pliable enough to be bent any way; and your Darling, Liberty of Conscience, as you are not ashamed to tell us, made no scruple of Conscience, to sit down and Reign with *Cromwel*.

But if in *Cromwel's* time, you were one of those who Enjoyed the Liberty of your Conscience, we are sure that we could not Enjoy the Liberty of ours: Was not Prelacy, as well as Popery, excepted in the Instrument of Government, that Liberty should not Extend to that Perswasion? Was not the Reading Common-Prayer a thing then Prohibited? and that under no less a Penalty than Deprivation, and sometimes Deportation for the third Committing such an Offence? An Episcopal Divine was then forbidden to Preach, or so much as to keep a School. Let us remember the Major Generals, and then we shall not forget what kind of Liberty of Conscience that was which *sate down, and reigned with Cromwel*. This is, I must needs say, a bold way of making a Proposition to the *King*, to tell him of *Eternizing of Cromwel*.

P*Ag. 47.* We here meet with a Query so very impertinent to the matter in hand, that I wonder how it was brought in. *The Bishops, and Deans, and Prebends, he thinks, should not have had the whole profit of their Leases, the Arrears might have been left for publick Accounts, and good works.*

In a Discourse which pretends wholly to Peace and Accommodation, I wonder how this comes in, being perfectly Extrinsecal to any thing which they at present have any occasion to plead for, unless they have a fancy that they cannot serve God now according to their Consciences, because that the Bishops, seven years ago, were permitted to have the Letting of their own Leases.

But if a *Tender Conscience* be that which is afraid of the very appearance of Sin; How comes it to pass that they are so angry that the State did not commit Sacriledg? These men cannot be content, if the Church doth ever recover Her own, and be but once, as it were, *expostliminio*, restored to those Rights which they had once Robbed Her of. Not to mention Merits, or Sufferings, we only speak of the Justice of the thing. His Majesty's Piety is indeed for ever to be Celebrated, in being thus the Church's Nurfing-Father; it had suffered for Him, and He scorned that Advice which would have had it to Suffer by Him. And as for the *good works* which he fancied that money might have been better employed in, Who shall secure us, that, suppose the Church had lost it, it should have been employed wholly in *good works*? Was not this the very Plea of Judas, *Might not This have been sold for five hundred pence, and given to the Poor*? How Charitable and Publick-Spirited are these men grown upon other mens Purfes!

“Former Sacriledges have been committed upon such plausible pretences as the *Publick Benefit* and *Security*; but if we consult things aright, we shall not find that the *Publick* ever gained by such courses, nor do we believe that it ever will; nor indeed is it fit that it should do so. While these things continue in the Church, the *Publick* hath a considerable Interest in them: take them away thence, and you raise some private Families, whose turn being now served, the *Publick* hath no influence upon them any longer. Men may talk of the Common Good, and pretend that; but no man will be an Instrument of Sacriledg, without an eye to his *Private Interest*. As the Case now stands, How much of the Churches *Revenue* is still payable to the King? And how much more hath He the *Disposal* of? Now those Lands are in the hands of those who are the King's constant Dependents; take them away, and you may give them to those who may
imme-

"immediately turn his *Enemies*; and if we should make an Observa-
 "tion upon experience, we might perhaps find, that those who have
 "enjoyed the spoils of the Church, have not alwayes shewed them-
 "selves the firmeest *Friends* to the *Crown*. But as to that money for
 "Fines, which the Author speaks only about, we think it was employed
 "about very good Works: Was not the Repairing of the Twenty
 "years Losses of so many Learned, Pious, and Loyal Persons, of
 "it self a very good work? The Repairing of *Cathedrals*, and furnishing
 "of them, was a very good, and a very costly work: The Redemption of
 "Captives, was a very good work: His Majesty's Favour was most
 "humbly acknowledged in a large Benevolence: The re-building of Hou-
 "ses, and augmentation of *Vicaridges* to eighty pounds *per annum*, was a
 "good, and a very great work. And to these let them add, how much was
 "abated to the *Tenant*, of that proportion which any other *Landlord*
 "would have taken; let us consider these things, I say, and we shall
 "find, the summes of money which came really into the pockets of the
 "Clergy at that time, not to have been in any proportion near that
 "which Envy hath Suggested. I shall add but one Consideration
 "more, which I did not joyn with the rest; because, though it was a
 "great Loss and Charge to the Church, I can scarce reckon, to have
 "been a good work; and that was, the Consideration, which was taken
 "of the *Purchasers*, who of all men had perhaps the least rea-
 "son to be considered; yet so generous was the Churches mercy,
 "as she did not only forgive, but reward those who had been the Rob-
 "bers of, and Spoilers of Her Houses and her Patrimony.

IN the next place, p. 49. *Our Author thinks that the Covenant ought not*
to have been renounced, &c. If this care had not been taken, the
 People might have had some temptation to believe, That the State had
 tacitly confessed, that the Covenant had had some real Obligation: and
 if that were once allowed, the whole Foundation of this Proposition
 had been utterly removed; so great a part of the Nation having (as
 we have before observed) sworn to bring the Nation to Uniformity,
 1. art. of the *Cov.*

This might have been a President for a violent Faction, or part of
 the two Houses to impose an Oath another time; had not that practise of
 theirs been so solemnly disclaimed, it might have been then said, that this
 had been done by them once before, not only without, but against the
Kings Express Command and Authority, and that Act of theirs was not

so much as questioned; which sure it would have been, had it not been warrantable; especially since all who took the Covenant, have therein sworn to defend each other, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and that they shall not suffer themselves Directly, or Indirectly, &c. to be Divided and withdrawn from this Blessed Union, whether to make Defection to the contrary part, or to give our selves to a detestable Indifferency, or neutrality in this Cause, &c. But shall all the dayes of our Life, zealously and constantly continue therein against all Opposition, and promote the same according to our Power, against all Lets and Impediments whatsoever, &c. See 6 Art. of Cov. The King's Enemies had an Act of Indemnity; but nothing could have secured the King's Friends, so long as the Covenant was not declared Null; the fourth Article lying as a Bond upon a considerable part of the Nation, to bring all them to Trial and Condemn Punishment.

Now is it at all credible, that any Nation in the World would allow a great part of the People to believe themselves to continue under the Obligation of an Oath entred into, in the time of, and in the pursuance of a Rebellion; an Oath downright contrary to the standing Laws and Government, and yet not so much as call upon them to disclaim it? No, sure all wise Estates would agree to that known saying of Henry the Fourth, That He would be ready to make a Peace with any of the Leaguers, but he would never make any Peace with the League.

Page 54. There are among the Non-conformists, sober and Godly men, which are to be compounded with; and there are zealous and Giddy, which are to be born with, &c. But how are we sure that it will not Displease the Former, that we bear with the Later? We do very well remember, that there was a time that themselves would not have done it, and that they were very angry with those who did Do it. What Composition, or what Toleration will serve the turn, we know not: But if themselves will once agree upon it, what it is which will please them, each and all; they shall then know more of Our minds concerning it.

For the Later of these sorts, it is proposed, viz. The zealous and giddy, That there may be a Liberty granted to these People, for Assembling according to their Consciences; (a rare Contrivance this, that there must be Publick Liberty to giddy zeal!) but their Meeting-places should be open, (that others may turn giddy, by beholding their giddiness)

dineſs) *that ſo if they ſpeak any thing againſt the State, there may be ſome ready to bear witneſs of it* : Alas, How eaſie is it to Couch Sedition in words very innocent of themſelves, ſo that the Law ſhall not be able to take advantage over them ; and yet the Auditors ſhall very well underſtand their meaning ! But if this be not Caution enough, we have one more, *That no man be ſuffered to ſpeak there, who is not Forty years of age, at leaſt Thirty five.* Now theſe two cautions he ſuppoſeth will render Conventicles very harmleſs. And truly we like them only thus far, as they have ſomething of a Rule in them ; for the leſſer Liberty they have, the leſſer harm they will do ; the more a Conventicle is bound up, the leſs it is it ſelf, and conſequently, the leſs Miſchievous : But we doubt, that this Caution will not be ſufficient ; becauſe, when men arrive to thoſe years, they may perhaps be more wary, but not at all the leſs Dangerous. But why may not ſome of thoſe, whom this Rule Excludes, reply upon this Propoſition, That He who makes it, is himſelf a Borderer upon Antichriſt ; And that His Feet ſtand upon the very Brink of *Babylon* : He hath in him ſo plain a Tang of an Impoſing-Spirit. Muſt the motions of the Spirit expect, till he arrives at Forty ? Hath not a man a Conſcience, and that a tender One, till he is Thirty five years old ? Muſt precious Gifts wait till we are of ſuch an Age ? What is this but a Contrivance of Man, a plain Iſſue of a Carnal Spirit ? Liberty of Conſcience ought to be left to its own Liberty, or it cannot poſſibly be called by that Name. Doth the Scripture tie us up to ſuch a year ? And who ſhall dare to Impoſe, what Chriſt hath left free ? What ever answer you would return to ſo wild a Diſcourſe, think upon and try, whether it would not juſtify the Magiſtrates proceeding altogether as well as your own ; you will find, there is a neceſſity of a Rule, and then your great pretence for each private Conſcience, ſtating its own Liberty, is utterly and unavoidably laid aſide and gone.

BUT p. 61. He readily foreſees, that a much greater Latitude than himſelf intends, will be apt to get in at this wide door of *Liberty of Conſcience*, and therefore he takes care to ſhut it *againſt the Pap.iſts*. There is nothing more plain, than that if theſe Arguments of his are valid, they conclude for the Pap.iſts and the Turk too, If any one of them be a man of *Conſcience*, and that in his Religion he act according to it. *But the Parliament will provide well enough in that matter, p. 62.*

No

No doubt they will, but we are sure that they cannot possibly do it but by doing that which this whole Book is designed against, *viz.* In imposing Penalties in matters of Religion, and exacting those Penalties too, although those whom they exact them of, should happen to be really Conscientious.

PAge 66. We meet with some Proposals to alter divers of our Civil Laws, *As Enfranchisements of Servile Tenures, enjoying every one to buy his own Tythe, and the money laid out in glebe, a Register of Estates, Tenderness toward Consciences.*

These are fine projects, and if the Author thinks it worth his while, he may deal with those who are most concerned in his designed alterations; but the first of them makes us doubt, that the man may be inclined to be a *Leveller*; and so we leave him to the mercy of the Landlords.

But these Inventions do delight our Author so very much, That he thinks that they alone are security enough for the Everlasting Peace of the Nation; and they are enlarged upon, as if the man really thought that there were something in them; For, when things are brought about, as he hath contrived, then there must needs for ever after, be amongst us a calm and a most settled Peace: For saith he, *where there are no hopes from Innovation, no body will go about to make it; But when a People have all that can be had, &c. then there will be no hopes from an Innovation; Ergo, When these things are taken into Consideration, then shall our Government of Monarchy in this Land, (leaving the Persons of our Successive Sovereigns unto Providence and their Chances) be out of danger for future Generations.*

What is here meant by (leaving the Persons of our Successive Sovereigns unto Providence and their Chances) I wish our Author had farther explained himself; But as for his contrivance to settle things at that pass, that no body shall have hopes from, nor desire to, an Innovation; I dare say that this Gentleman is no States-man, in that he supposeth such a thing so much as possible; this thing is only then to be hoped for, when there will be no Ambitious, no Revengeful, no Discontented, no Poor, no Mistaken man in the Nation. There will be always those who wish for a Change, because that there will be always those, whose present condition is not altogether so splendid as they could wish it to be: In the most happy Times, some will really be, more will fancy themselves to be, unhappy.

Our

Our Author some pages backwards, tells us, That if he is mistaken in the Argument he there prosecutes, *he will shut up his Table-Book, and make no more Observations from Experience.* Truly I shall even give him leave to do so, seeing that he hath learnt no more from it, than to believe that Innovators are in earnest, when they profess that they take up Arms only for the common good.

THese Proposals being over, There is a long pitiful Address; the summ of all that which it is founded upon, being p. 72. *Do you know that many of these things are really against mens Consciences? and would you indeed have any such to do them, though they be so?*

If these things are really, and in good earnest against their Consciences, we are sorry for it, and do not know how to help it, but themselves do, or when they please may do so: In the mean time, why should not this Author joyn with us, in Condemning those Preachers which infuse such needless jealousies into the Peoples heads, which himself confesseth (as we have often observed) that there is no real cause for? Himself confesseth that they are not more panick, than empty terrors, he resembleth them to the fear of *Fairies*, and supposeth that there is nothing in them. But, Which, now think we, should give place? The publick Law, or the private Consciences? especially in our Case, where the Apologist owns the Law as to the matter, to be in the right, and verily believes that the Conscience as to the scruple is in the wrong. But what is now to be done as the Case stands? The Command is only to a Lawful thing as it hath been often granted, but it is believed to be unlawful: I shall answer this which is the grand fundamental doubt, out of the words of one of the chief Ring-leaders of that Party, (and for his sake, I hope they may meet with a fair Reception) Mr. Baxter in his Disputations about Church-Government, Chap. 15. P. 483. *If we do through weakness or perverseness, take Lawful things to be unlawful, that will not excuse us in our disobedience, our error is our sin, and one sin will not excuse another sin; & paulo post, It is their own erring judgment that intang'eth them in a necessity of sinning till it be changed, with much more to the same purpose, in that whole Chapter throughout.*

But after all this Dispute, suppose at the last that it shold not be Conscience, and in many of their Leaders, we have great evidence, that it is not so. At the conference at *Hampton Court* before King James, Dr.

Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Knewstubb, Mr. Chatterton, did clamour as loud about Conscience as any now do, or can. But when the Arguments upon which their Consciences pretended to be founded, were to their own Conviction, all weighed and answered, there was then desired an Indulgence for some few worthy and sober men, because of their Credit: And are we sure, that Credit hath nothing to do in this Case? Men are loath to use these Ceremonies, lest they should lose the Credit of that zeal, which hath formerly appeared so much against them.

BUT p. 77. *It is not the severity of Laws that can do anything with the mind, though it may with the outward man: Force may make men Hypocrites, not Converts, to a Faith which is enjoyned, &c.*

*Tmor pœna-
rum est non-
dum habet bo-
ne conscientie
destitutionem
saltem intra
claustra cogi-
tationis coeret
malam cupidi-
tatem Aug.
cont a literas
Petiliani. Lib.
2. Chap. 83.*

To this we answer with *St. Austin*, If it doth not remove the Error, yet it may prevent its spreading. If it doth not utterly take away the Cause, yet it hinders most of its mischievous Effects: And in a little time, it may do the other too: Here-
sie is not seated so solely and altogether in the Mind, but *St. Paul* thinks fit to rank it among the works of the Flesh, it hath often-times no sub-
limer Motives, than many other of the most sensual Transgressions; outward Considerations, are very frequently its cause, and may some-
times be its Cure. And this our Author Himself assures us of, That this is the best way to fetch in others, *who certainly will grow weary at the long run, when they shall have work provided, but no Benefice, till they Conform: One of his own Projects depends upon this, that the having no Benefice, will be a most effectual means to make them in time, willing to Conform. I shall only add to this, that these are very bold Beggars, who whilst they are pleading for Indulgence and Moderation, cannot forbear to throw out threatnings. If the Bishops will not, &c. They may write down in the Books of what shall hereafter befall them. Mo-
niti meliora p. &c.*

This is something of the Strain of *Martin Junior*, We have sought to advance this Cause of God, by humble suit to the *Parliament, &c.* Seeing now, the means used by Us have not prevailed, if it come in by that means, which will make all your hearts to ake, blame your selves, *Bancrof.* out of *Mart. p. 144. Dangerous Positions* and practises.

There is one Concession behind, which we are to thank our Author for, that He seems p. 86, 87, to hold it unlawful to expect Deliverance from any, but the *King*: We desire only to know whether all the
Party

Party which He pleads for, be of that mind too. Mr. *Hooker* assures Us, that your Predecessors were of the opinion, That their way was to be set up whether Her Majesty or the State will or no. *Hooker Pref.* out of *Martin*, p. 28. and in the King's large Declaration, concerning the Tumults in *Scotland*, p. 409. We meet with several of their positions laid down, amongst which, This is one, *It is Lawful for Subjects to make a Covenant and Combination without the King, and to enter into a Band of Mutual Defence against the King, and all Persons whatever*; and yet there were Two Acts of Parliament at that time in force, which declared all such contrivances punishable with Death.

And we do not at all doubt, but that if we had a mind to it, we could give one considerable Instance within the Memory of Man, how this whole Party here pleaded for, did unanimously, and with great Vigour list themselves apace, did contribute their Persons, Prayers and Purfes, toward the forming and maintaining of an Army, to say no more, not raised by the King. It doth therefore highly concern these People publickly to disown their Predecessors, and their own Principles and Practices, or else they cannot expect to be believed in This, so seemingly Loyal a Concession, *That it is unlawful to expect deliverance from any but the King.*

I do not remember any other passage in this Proposition, to be at all Considerable; only one Notion he hath, which is scattered up and down his Book, that *Penalties* and Rigour doth but alienate their minds farther from us; whereas Indulgence would work upon their Affections, and by degrees upon their Judgments. Now on the other side, we think, and that upon the Grounds of Experience, as well as Reason, That there is not good nature enough in them for kind usage to work upon; of this we shall give one, but that shall be a most convincing Evidence. The *Kings Majesty*, immediately after his most happy Restoration, being desirous to satisfy so many of all Parties, as did not resolve for ever to remain unsatisfied, did accordingly give so much respect to the clamours then made against the *Liturgy*, as to order a review of it. But withal did, by his Declaration set forth about that affair, desire, that so many of Them as would be thought Conscientious, or peaceable, would in the mean time read *so much* of the *Liturgy*, as themselves had no Exception against: an easie request one would think; Read only so much as you have no Exception against: Here Conscience sure could not be pretended, when their own Conscience (nay their very jealousy) was the only Rule which was set Them to walk by, yet they stood it out, only because there was no danger in stand-

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ing: out and after all, the Act of Uniformity brought many of the fiercest to read the whole of that, of which before they could not be brought to read a syllable; so much is a *Law* more available than an *Indulgence*: And as many did come in that *Bartholomew-tide*, so (had there not been so great expectation of a Toleration) we have reason to believe, that many more would have come in.

WE have now Considered every passage in this Treatise, which seems to be any way Material; and must take leave to profess that we are not able to guess what it is which this Author really would have; and we farther believe, that he himself cannot tell us: Nor need we desire the Laws to continue in force any longer, than till the Tender Consciences can agree what to have in the stead of them. The Penner seems in one place, to be one of the most Moderate, and not to desire the removal of our present Constitutions, but only a temporary Indulgence toward some Persons, whom he thinks very well of, as being in his Opinion, men sober in their Judgments and in their Lives, only they have got some odd Jealousies in their Heads; which though the *Apologist* is verily perswaded, *that they have nothing in them*; yet he would have the men born with, as being otherwise good men; and besides he thinks, that by this means there is great hopes, that Liberty, and Custom may in time prevail over these acknowledgedly groundless fancies. This is his sense, p. 18. 29. 74. &c. But a Law, with an Indulgence annexed to it, is *felo de se*: It may something be resembled to *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, whose feet were partly Iron, and partly Clay: (i. e.) as *Daniel* there interprets it, such a Kingdom shall partly be strong, and partly broken; and as it is there said that the Iron shall not mix with the Clay, so it will be here, the *Conformists* and *Non-conformists* shall never care to joyn, or be heartily brought to love one another: the difference of Judgment doth unavoidably slide into distance of affection, and from the profession, we are naturally brought to dislike the Persons who are of it.

Besides to Relax a Law upon the account of Conscience, or the pretences of a higher degree of Purity in the same Religion, is as much as to Proclaim the Dissenters, to be the most really Conscientious: That those who do Conform, are meer Formalists, Time-servers, compliers with that which is uppermost; but the *Non-conformists* shall be taken for the Sincere men, who walk according to Light, and to keep the Gospel pure without the mixture of humane Inventions: And this alone will be a very great Temptation to many an honest, but weak man,

man, who hath more Zeal than knowledg, to Enrol himself among those Men, who are allowed to differ from the Religion of the State upon the pretence of higher Purity, and greater attainments.

But because that this Proposal pretends to be made very much upon hopes; that by this means, the differences will in a short time, be brought to cease of their own accord: We desire therefore to Know, how long he would have this time of Tryal last; or will he yield, that if this course doth fail, as to this promised effect, that after such a time is past, we shall have recourse to our old Laws again; and for the present, I wish it were Stated now, how far he would have this Indulgence reach: And that we knew certainly, what were a *tender Conscience*. Shall it be sufficient to pretend a Scruple at the Law? or is there any other Rule to know this by? Or must we believe every one who saith, he doth scruple it: St. Peter says, *There be some who speak Lies in Hypocrisie, because of advantage*: Who now shall distinguish, unless there be some other Judge, beside the party concerning whom this question may arise? I desire farther to know, whether this pretence shall reach absolutely and universally to all sorts of Consciences, and all manner of pretences of them, or else Limitedly, and Restrainedly to such a sort or number of them. And we would fain know certainly, what those sorts, kinds and numbers are. Let our Author pitch upon which of these two Members of the Division he pleaseth, and then try if with either of them, he can bring his whole Party to subscribe: This we all desire to have, and thus much we will be content with; we are sure that the Sectaries will not be content with one; and we are sure that the time was, when the *Presbyterian*, would not endure the other; And this very Author seems much Divided in the Points: one while, he seems only for an accommodation between Us and the sober Protestant, by which soft phrase he understands the *Presbyterians*, and while he is in this mood, he explodes the wildness of the Sectary, and compares him and the Papiſt to the upper and nether Jaw of Destruction, opening her Mouth upon Us, p. 7.

But in another place, he is plainly of another mind, pleading earnestly and openly for that *Liberty of Conscience, which sat down and Reigned with Cromwel*, p. 45. and that we know was down-right Sectarism; now it is but reasonable for us to demand, which of these two Pleas he would stick to; both he cannot have, because they are Inconsistent, and if the Law would consent, yet these two distant Pleas will not, cannot agree, but must necessarily everthrow each other.

It highly concerns all those who are for making Alterations in Laws

and Governments, to consider what it is they are about, and whether their present contrivances are like to carry them, lest they unawares bring things to such a pass, which themselves will be most sorry to see them at. Of all Projects, Innovation doth most often fail the hopes conceived of it, The Beginners being frequently ashamed before they come half way to the end; and it must needs always be so, because such a work is not to be carried on, but by great multitudes of several Interests and Inclinations; the greatest part of which must necessarily be disappointed, and consequently discontented, and so many unforeseen accidents do perpetually arise, in a business of this nature; new people and new principles coming every day in Play, that the First beginnings are become utterly at a Loss, they are immediately out-gone and presently after laid aside. But not to carry this observation farther than our present business, the *Presbyterians* and the *Seculars*, however they may joyn now in the making of this Proposition, let it be but once granted, and they shall immediately differ upon the nature and bounds of it: late experience hath given us abundant Evidence, that neither of these, have reason to trust one another: The one only meaning to change us into another sort of Government: The latter, not enduring any such thing: All *Europe* is witness, that nothing but the fear of a common Enemy, or a common Force over them, is able to keep the *Godly of all Judgments* from running foul one upon another.

If we should now ask a *Presbyterian*, if he would be willing to be accounted accessory to the infinite number of Heresies, Schisms and Scandals which will immediatly, and unavoidably arise, if every one be left to walk according to their own Light and Conscience, he will answer, Far be it from him, to be guilty of so horrid a thing, he hath Covenanted, Preached, Written, bore Testimony against, so sinful and Intolerable a Toleration. And on the other hand, go to the *Secular* and ask him, Is this your meaning, only to change our Form of Government, for another you like better of? he will answer, no by no means: They are all alike of humane Invention, and so alike blameable; besides, they will abhor to be oppressed by those of their own Party, while they Act but in pursuance of their common Principle; and this you shall have more fully, in the words of the common Champion and Patron of them, both about this very Argument and concerning the *Presbyterians*, *Had not they (viz. the Presb.) laboured but lately under the weight of Persecution? and was it for them to sit heavy upon others? Is it Ingenuous to ask Liberty, and to give it? what greater Hypocrisie than*
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for those who were oppressed by the Bishops, to become the greatest oppressors themselves, so soon as the Yoke was removed? Oliver Cromwel in his speech at the Dissolution of one of his Parliaments, 1654.p.18. These therefore, however they may now piece up into one, are really two Parties, have Designs absolutely inconsistent; that which soever prevails, the other is like to have little joy of it.

But as it is Evident, that neither of these will Tolerate each other; so there is no reason, why the Magistrate should Tolerate either of them: And first, For the *Presbyterian*; the reason is clear, because he will Tolerate no body else, as appears plainly by the Covenant: and if you will have one shameful Instance of their Rigour, remember how they had the face to deny to that *Royal Martyr* our late Sovereign of Blessed Memory, the attendance of his own Chaplains; He must make use of their way of Devotion, or by their Consent, He must have none at all; give me such another Instance of Barbarity, and seek it where you can.

After this, it is needless sure to give you another Instance of their rigour, indeed of their Inhumanity; but yet we must do it, to shew their constant temper. Deposing of Kings comes but seldom, therefore we shall see what private men are to expect from them; *They have refused to admit to the Communion, or to pray for people lying on their Death-bed, only for not taking the Covenant; have declared that all Non-subscribers were Atheists:* These mild inoffensive people, who must be dealt so tenderly with, because of their weakness, have preached it publicly, *That Episcopacy must not only be pulled up, but the Bishops must be hanged up before the Lord, and that the bloodiest and sharpest War was to be endured, rather than the least error in Doctrine, or in Discipline.* See the large Declaration concerning the *Scots*, p. 404.

And how the Magistrate is particularly concerned to reduce these men to order, appears from the Insolencies they have committed and defended against him, when they have been cited to appear before the King and His Council, for some of these seditious Preachments; i. e. "Being commanded to appear before the King and Council, they refused with a disdainful kind of contempt, alledging that *Pulpits* were exempt from the Authority of Kings and Ecclesiastical Persons, were subject not to the Authority of the Prince, but to the Presbyterian. *Cambden Eliz.* p. 361.

*Coram compa-
rare iussi fasti-
dio quodam
contemptu
abnuent,
quasi Pulpita
a Regum Au-*

ab initio essent exempta; & Ecclesiastici non principis Imperio sed Presbyterio subessent.

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And amongst other, this was plainly averred in the Case of Mr. Andrew Melvin, who being cited before the King and His Council, declined their judgment, affirming that *what was spoken in the Pulpit, ought first to be tryed by the Presbytery, and neither King nor Council might in prima instantia meddle therewith, though the Speeches were Treasonable.* Spotswood, p. 330.

But that a King is concerned as much as his Royalty is worth, to provide against these men, will appear by sixteen of their publick and owned *Positions*, all to be met with in the forementioned *Kings* great Declaration, concerning *Scottish Tumults*, 407.&c. of which we single out these. 7th pos. *The Assembly is independent, either from King or Parliament in matters Ecclesiastical.* pos. 9th *It is lawful for Subjects to make a Covenant and Combination without the King, and to enter into a Bond of Mutual Defence against the King and all Persons whatsoever.* pos. 11th. *If Subjects be called before the King and Council for any misdemeanour, If they who are called, do any way conceive that the matter for which they are called, doth concern the Glory of God, or the good of the Church, then they may appeal from the King and Council to the next General Assembly and Parliament; and in the mean time before their appeals are heard or discussed, they may disobey the King and Council.* pos. 12. *That when the King is intreated to indict a General Assembly, it is not that there is any need of his indiction, but rather to do him honour, and to beget countenance to their proceedings.* pos. 14. *An Assembly may abrogate Acts of Parliament, and discharging Subjects of their obedience to them, if they any way respect on the business of the Church.* pos. 15. *The protestation of Subjects against Laws established, whether it be made Coram Judice, or Non Judice, before the Judges or the People, doth void all obedience to those Laws, and dischargeth all the Protestors from any Obligation to live under them, before ever those Protestations and the validity of them shall come to be discussed before the Competent Judges of them, nay, although they be repelled by the Judge, before whom they were made.* And this they taught their Profelytes to do often in the Market-place, and so they discharged themselves and one another from any Law as often as they pleased. pos. 16. *A number of men being the greater part of the Kingdom, may do any thing which they themselves conceive to be conducing to the Glory of God, and the good of the Church, notwithstanding any Laws standing in force to the contrary,* p. 413. large Declaration.

Having now done with these, the toleration of the Sects will I hope be dispatched easily. The Mother Sect being laid aside, the lesser under ones

ones will not hope to stay behind: And surely if the Magistrate love Religion or himself; he will not be perswaded to tolerate these neither. First, for Religion, who seeth not that this Artifice makes Religion weak and despicable by the being crumbled into so many pieces? it renders it most ridiculous by being so exposed to all sorts of dotage and imposture. What can possibly give unbelievers a more just and frequent occasion of scorn than this, that every one who hath but a freak in his brain, shall have free liberty if he pleaseth, to Christen it a motion of Spirit? when every thing that is most extravagant, may have Licence at pleasure to recommend it self as a degree of farther Light. Here we shall see men shaking all day, as if the Spirit came to them in Convulsions; there we shall see them run naked about the Streets as if with the Old Man they had put off all degrees of Modesty. But these things cannot perfectly be described, because they may vary every moment, no man living being able to tell how many more absurdities this may come to in the very next moment. Whether the Sects be fit to be tolerated, can only then be reasonably determined, when we are certain how many, and what they are. And as to the outward part of the Magistrates care in this business, who shall secure us, that this Liberty of Conscience may not in a while be pleaded for, as to *moral transgressions*? also according as the Light doth farther encrease upon them, *Quid quod de furtis quoq; & adulteriis & homicidiis inter Anabaptistas & Libertinos Quaritur an scelera sint? Beza de Hereticis à Magistratu puniendis*; p. 118. What a pitiful restraint is a Law to a man who hath a Vision? tell him of an Act of Parliament, he comes full fraught with the mind of God; nay, what shall the most exprefs precept in all the Scripture signifie to one who is got above the dispensation of the Letter? Let us remember the Anabaptists in Germany, no men meeker at first, none bloodier at last. *Sleiden. Lib. 10. p. 247.*

Now that the Magistrate will find himself to be highly concern'd what opinions any numbers of men shall once come to profess in his Dominions. is hence evident, because that Opinions have a very great influence upon Actions: He who is allowed to raise a Sect, hath a very fair opportunity put into his hands of making himself Head of such a Party, and by being permitted to have their Consciences, he will find it no hard matter, to have their Persons and their Purses at his own disposal too. Hence it is, though some Princes have been sometimes forced to suffer dissenters from the Established Profession; (by reason that they were so numerous, or so subtle, that they could not go about to suppress them without discovering how unable they were to do so) yet they always looked up-

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On such *Dissenters*, as the next door to *Enemies*; and accordingly had perpetual eye and guard upon them, as those who were of all other the most likely to be the Authors, or occasion of the next disturbance. It is a great mistake, to imagine that Sects are things to be despised, because that men of Parts and Breeding are not easily nor usually the first which are seduced by them; we shall grant that its beginning, nay, and its greatest growth are amongst the meanest people, those whose fortunes are low as their understandings; but perhaps it may not end there neither; but like a *Pestilence* which may begin in an obscure Alley, and yet in a while no part of the City or Kingdom may be free from it: Besides, are not the vulgar People the Hands and Instruments which the greatest must always make use of? and a Deception got amongst them, may by a little Connivance multiply so fast, as to be able to dispute for Superiority, and instead of longer *demanding* an *Indulgence*, they may in a little time refuse to *give* one; and by how much the ordinary sorts of People are less masters of Reason, by so much the easier may they be set on in those courses, which are absolutely unreasonable.

The safety of all Governments doth Depend upon This, That it is certainly stronger than each single Person; and for all sorts of Unions and Joyning Heads and Forces together, that There be no such Things, but under the Guidance of the Magistrate, and by His appointment: And then be the Discontented Persons never so many, yet so long as They have *no* way of *Uniting*, They are but so many single Persons, Scattered, Weak and Insignificant, having no means of any Common Council, They can never joyn in any Common Design. But let them once have any one *Phrase*, to know one Another by, any *settled Place* for their constant Meetings, and a Set and *Known* Company for Them to Meet with; or any Bond whatever, which doth Unite Them, and They presently become a *Distinct People* and begin to be Dangerous, as having an Interest and Counsels of their own, which th^e Government is not the Manager of, nor Privy to; but shall quickly find it self highly concern'd, by all means to provide against. And this is the Foundation of that advice which *Mæcenus* gave to *Augustus*, At no hand to endure Those who attempted to bring in *new* strange *Worships* into the State, *Dion. Cass. Lib. 56. l. 1, 52. p. 561. in Edit. Steph.* For from thence
saith,

faith he proceed. * Some Confederations, Conspiracies, and Associations, things certainly which the Government had need to be much aware off. And it is a very vain thing to Imagine, that those who profess such great niceness of Conscience, whatever their opinions be, they will use none but lawful wayes to promote them: It is rather true, that they will reckon all wayes lawful, by which it is possible, that they may promote them.

Let it once be permitted to crafty, active and talking men, to Infill into the minds of all sorts of people the necessity, usefulness, or the rare excellency of any one thing, or Contrivance whatever beyond all that which the present Laws and establishment doth provide for: and is not here a most readily prepared matter for any bold *Bonafide* to work upon, who will take upon him to help the Nation immediatly to this so fine a thing: Hath not any such undertaker, a vast and already formed party in all parts of the Nation? Let him but represent it to them, that the present Government is the only rub which is in their way between them and this their so fancied happiness, and what will be a consequent resolution; but let us remove that obstacle, so publick a good is much to be preferred sure before any particular form or family, the welfare of the Nation is the great End, and Governors themselves were created but in order to that, and consequently are to cease as often as that End can be better attained without them.

Though the pretence be nothing but *Conscience*, yet every discontent will joyn to make the cry most loud and general. *Schismes* do of themselves naturally grow into Parties, and besides are most plausible occasions for any else to joyn unto them. The gathered Churches are most excellent materials to raise new *Troops* out of: and when they are thus far prepared they are at the service of any one who will attempt to lead them on.

If *All* men were Wife and Honest, if every one understood well and would act accordingly, it were then perhaps reasonable enough to leave things clearly to Conscience, as the very best Rule we could possibly think of: But let us adde, that if this would supersede the necessity of the coercive power of our Laws in Religious matters, it would do this much more in all civil Ones: For no Laws, which ever were or can be in the world, can provide in any degree for those large measures of Justice, Equity and Fair dealing, which would infallibly everywhere be to be met with, if we were sure that men would always have a care to keep a good Conscience: Truth, Justice, Temperance, &c. are things which every mans Conscience doth, and must needs tell him

[illegible]

Mæcenatis ora-
tio apud Dion-
nem. Cast. l. 52.
p. 56 r. in Editio-
ne Steph.

are his Duty. Yet were it not for the fear of *Laws* we should find that Conscience is not *alone* to be trusted, even in these things which are her Natural, her most familiar Objects. And if we see that she doth daily prævaricate in these plain and obvious things where she is so easily found out; we have no great cause to trust to her fidelity: that she will not also dissemble in those things which are more remote and obscure, and hidden so far from the belt of our discovery. Let those therefore who plead for *Liberty of Conscience* consider, that there are *Two sorts* of men which ought to be provided against, to keep this Contrivance of theirs from being absolutely the most senseless and dangerous in the whole World: and we profess our selves unable upon their grounds to provide against them, *viz.* Those who do *pretend* Conscience; and those who *abuse* it. And there is a *Third* sort likewise which some care ought to be taken of, *viz.* Those *vast* numbers which are every day still lyable to be more and more abused by such Pretences. Those Laws are not fitted for the Temper of this World, which proceed upon this Supposition, That every one who looks demurely is presently in good earnest; That men say nothing but what they think. Let us consider, that it is very possible for men to Personate, and then we shall not be so eager to desire a general licence for every one who hath a mind to become a publick Cheat.

The *Inconveniences* likewise, which such a *Toleration* will bring upon a *Temporal* account, will be very great and very *Universal*: not a City, nor a Parish, nay perhaps not a Family free from them. And we shall quickly see what a sad pass things will come at, if the unconsidering part of mankind shall ly thus exposed to every one who will go about to deceive them.

And then from these diversities of Judgments, and many times when it is only *different* forms of speaking, there will immediately arise great distances of affection: for these *divisions* of Reuben *there will* presently *be great thoughts of Heart*, Surmisings, Censures, Jealousies, Railings, Evil-speaking, Animosities, Peevishness, Malice, perverse Disputings, and every evil way, each Congregation will have some one little Proposition, which all its Profelytes must be known by, which all their thoughts must be always running upon, and every body else must needs come up too. The smallest gathered Church cannot hold its Members together, unless it hath some particular thing to engage them upon, and to have them known by: For they cannot with any face separate from all Mankind, but they must have something to say for it.

This Contrivance, however it be absurd and dangerous, will notwithstanding

wiſtanding that, have alwayes many who will be very fond of it, for it is a moſt ready way for every forward fellow to think himſelf ſome-what in that he is got into ſuch a Sect; and then he thinks, that if he can but improve the notion a little farther, he ſhall then be the more taken notice of: and if he finds that his Addition is but a little taking, he will then forſake his Maſters to ſet up for himſelf; divide from that Church of which he is now ſo precious a Member, to gather a purer of his own: And ſo this *Light* will ſerve moſt bravely for himſelf to ſhine in.

But if this had been a new Invention, its Contrivers might then have been allowed to have entertained huge hopes of it, but alas, it hath been often tryed and always brought great confuſion along with it: and therefore there was then great care taken by the *Romans*, what Religion their ſubjects were of, one of the ancienteſt Laws; we read of, *Separatim nemo habebat Deos, neve novos, ſed ne advenas niſi publicè adſitos privatim colanto.* Tul. l. 2. de legibus. XII TABLES. This was an eſpecial part of *Ediles* care. *Ne qui niſi Romano Dii, neque alio more quam patrio colerentur,* Liv. lib. 4. p. 155. Eaſily concluding that as ſoon as ever they had another Religion, their Countrey had loſt the better half of them. In variety of worſhip the one muſt needs reckon the other Erroneous, perhaps Impious; and then how lamentably muſt that City be divided, whoſe Inhabitants think themſelves bound as they love God to hate one another: and it hath been often ſeen that a common enemy hath crept in at their intestine diviſions, and deſtroyed both; while the one did not enough care to help the other.

Be our Apprehenſions concerning Divine matters never ſo different, I grant that we ought not for the ſake of them to want the duties of common humanity; we ſhall grant that ſo to do, is a great error. But alas! it is too general a one; and law-makers are to conſider not only what men ought, but what they uſe to do. Why ſhall I fight (ſaith one) for a Prince who is an Idolater? And why ſhould I (ſaith another) take any care to relieve that City which is only a Bundle of Schiſmaticks? And what was the policy of *Jeroboams calves* think we but this? He did not caſt off the true God, but only ſet up another way of Worſhip, as eaſily concluding, that if I can but perſwade them to be of another religion, I ſhall eaſily keep them to be another Kingdom; do but divide their Faiths, and the Nations will never care to unite again.

And pray tell me, what ſhall a *Prince* do in that caſe, where there are divers wayes of *Worſhip* allowed, and frequented in the ſame Nation? Shall he diſcountenance the profeſſors of any one, by keeping them out of

all Office and Employment? If so, he disoblige that whole Profession, loseth so many hearts, who sure will think themselves to be very hardly dealt with in that they are disrespected, only out of their Zeal to God, and because they follow the *best of their Light*. And what will they think of such a State, which doth refuse to employ them merely upon this account, because (in the words of our Author) they use all manner of means to save their Souls? Or *secondly*, shall the Prince carry himself equally and indifferently toward all Perswasions, countenance and prefer them all alike? This can hardly be, because he himself must be of some *One*, and that will think it self not fairly dealt with if it hath not some preheminance; And when he endeavours to shew himself indifferent to all perswasions, it will then be said, that he makes use of all Religions for his own Ends, but himself really is of none; and so perhaps none of them will be really for him: And thus by endeavoring to displease neither party, he shall certainly displease them both; at least the Zealots of all sides will represent him at the best as one Lukewarm, and so only fit (as it is in the *Revel.*) *to be spit out at their Mouths*.

Men may talk of their fine projects as long as they please, but surely where the Church is already so settled, as that it hath a great dependance on the Government, and the Government hath a standing influence upon that; those Politicks must needs be very strange which go about to alter such a Constitution, and instead of a Clergy thus regulated, it is no kindness sure to the *Monarchy* to set up such a Ministry which shall depend chiefly upon the *People*. And when the whole method of the Preachers maintenance, and reputation, must be the various Arts, by which he can either guide or follow the several humours of each of his Congregation; No man can tell what it is possible for a good Crafts-master to perswade the multitude unto.

As to our particular case, if these People, what this book pleads for, had barely a *Toleration*, I do not know that it would satisfy them; I suspect it may increase their number, and so enable them in a while to demand much more, and when they are a little stronger, their way would appear not only true but absolutely necessary. *v. d. Bancroft.* dangerous positions, and practices. pag. 108.

For however they do now speak us fair, and tell us, that the things imposed are all lawful, and all that they desire is, that some persons may in pity be borne with who do not think them to be lawful, yet we shrewdly suspect that they teach their Proselytes much *otherwise*; for the people as long as ever they have been under these mens Tutorage,
are

are not yet altogether so mad, as to make so great and withal so needless a separation: If their Teachers would but let them know so much, that these things are all lawful; which all this clamour and scruple is made about; they would never I say, be perswaded to have all these heart-burnings and jealousies, to fight and make parties against that Church, which in these its chiefest adversaryes esteems, held or practised nothing which was at all blame-worthy, any otherwise than as its Dissenters by mistake conceived it to be so. No certainly, the poor people are without doubt still led on with those obsolete and forsaken pleas of *Poperie*, *Superstition*, *Witch-Worship*, and *Idolatry*, which though their Teachers know, and here confess to be nothing, yet I doubt they will not let their Disciples know so much: they are perswaded that we are *Idolaters*, and have been more than once animated to execute the rigor of *Moses* his Law upon us for it: and when the next opportunity offers it self, we shall be called *Babylon* once more, and then the consequent will be as formerly, *Happy shall be he who taketh thy Children and dasheth them against the stones.*

In one word then, to allow this pretence of Conscience is no way prudent, because there is no probability that it can produce any good effect: It is a thing, of which you shall never be able to see a good end. *Toleration* then upon the whole matter is very unnecessary at this time, because the Impositions in the Apologists own Judgment are very lawful, it is very unsafe, because we know not how great Evils it may produce; we have shewed, that they will not tolerate each other, and that the Magistrate hath no reason to tolerate either of them, it brings great scandals upon Religion, and must needs breed great quarrels in the State. And lastly, If it were granted, themselves are not yet agreed about its Nature and Bounds, and so if we should at present give it, they would as yet be at a very great loss what to do with it. Let us then be permitted to continue as we are, seeing it is not agreed in what manner we shall be altered, and the Alterations proposed by this Author have been demonstrated to be dangerous to the Religion and to the government of the Kingdom.

There was another TREATISE lately Published concerning the due Latitude of Religion, that Author is likewise concerned to fix his own Latitude, and let us know how much it is; that he and his whole Party will be content with,

A Discourse of the Religion of England asserting, that Reformed Christianity settled in ITS DUE LATITUDE is the stability & advancement of the Kingdom. Lately printed.

I shall make no present observations upon him, but only lay down two of his own Concessions by which he hath clearly given up his whole Cause.

The first is, p. 28. Such is the complicated condition of humane affairs, that it is exceeding difficult to devise a Rule or Model that shal provide for all whom Equity will plead for. Therefore the Prudent and Sober will acquiesce in any Constitution, that is in some good sort proportionable to the Ends of Government. If so, they are in this Authors judgment neither Prudent nor Sober men, who call so loud for a Toleration.

The second is, p. 38. Nevertheless, if when all is said, some dissatisfaction doth invincibly possess the judgment, In that case, Christian Humility, and Charity as well as Discretion, adviseth such Persons to acquiesce in their private Security and Freedom, and not to reach after that Liberty, that may unsettle the Publick Order, and undermine the common Safety. If so, those men want Humility, Charity and Discretion, who demand a publick Liberty for their Consciences,

We take these few Lines to be a sufficient answer to all the Rest, and they are so plain, as that I shall not need to Comment upon Them.

F I N I S.

302 **Inconveniencies** (The) of Toleration, or an Answer to a late Book
entitled, "A Proposition Made to the King and Parliament for the Safety and Happiness
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